

Message Text

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51

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 TRSE-00

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O R 131537Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1306

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ETDR, EAIR, BTRA, SF, US

SUBJECT: SAFAIR PROPOSAL TO BUY SIX MORE L-100'S

REF: (A) STATE 025473 (NOTAL) (B) STATE 032278

1. SAFAIR DIRECTOR, ANTON LOMBARD, IS TRAVELING IN U.S. AND IS NOT EXPECTED RETURN SA UNTIL FEBRUARY 23. EMBASSY WILL DISCUSS PROPOSED PURCHASE SIX NEW L-100 AIRCRAFT WITH HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOLLOWING HIS RETURN. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, HAVE SPOKEN WITH SAFAIR CHIEF PILOT AND ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, JEFF DE JAGER, WHO PROJECTS THAT COMPANY COULD MAKE FULL USE OF 16 AIRCRAFT FOR CIVILIAN AIR CARGO HAULS BEFORE END 1976. PROJECTION, HE SAID, BASED IN PART ON EXPANDING INTERNAL MARKET AND SAA DESIRE INCREASE NUMBER OF SCHEDULED AIR CARGO FLIGHTS UNDER CHARTER ARRANGEMENT WITH SAFAIR. MORE SIGNIFICANT, HOWEVER, IS EXPECTED SAFAIR ROLE IN SAG EFFORT EXPAND TRADE TIES WITH BLACK AFRICA. ACCORDING TO DE JAGER, SAFAIR EXPECTS GET LION'S SHARE OF AIR CARGO BUSINESS BETWEEN SA AND SEVERAL AFRICAN STATES WITH WHICH

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TRADE LINKS NOW BEING FORGED. IN THIS CONTEXT, DE JAGER

MENTIONED SAFAIR CONTRACT FLY 300 TONS BUILDING MATERIALS TO BANGUI (DETAILS BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL) AND CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVING POSSIBLE SAFAIR ASSUMPTION ALASKA AIRLINES CONTRACTS IN BOTSWANA IN WAKE OF ALASKA'S WITHDRAWAL OF ITS TWO L-100'S FROM AFRICAN SERVICE.

2. RE CURRENT STATUS SAFAIR OPERATIONS, DE JAGER NOTED THAT FIVE L-100'S NOW IN OPERATION ARE BEING EXPLOITED TO FULLEST POSSIBLE EXTENT. WHILE LACKING PRECISE CIVAIR TO LOGAIR FIGURES, HE SAID RATIO RUNNING AT ABOUT 87:13. CIVILIAN MAINTENANCE CREWS PERFORMING ADEQUATELY BUT COMPANY MOVING GRADUALLY TOWARD ESTABLISHMENT OF OWN MAINTENANCE TEAMS TO REDUCE RELIANCE ON SAA. DE JAGER SAID THAT WHILE SAA CREWS GOOD ENOUGH, THEY TEND GIVE PRIORITY TO SAA NEEDS WHICH SOME-TIMES RESULTS IN UNACCEPTABLY LONG TURN-AROUND TIME FOR SAFAIR PLANES. ASKED WHETHER AIR FORCE STILL PERFORMING MAJOR ENGINE OVERHAULS, DE JAGER REPLIED THAT SAFAIR IN PROCESS OF CREATING OWN FACILITY FOR THIS SERVICE AS WELL. ON SUBJECT CIVILIANIZATION OF FLIGHT CREWS, HE COMMENTED THAT ALL FLIGHT PERSONNEL NOW CIVILIAN. COMPANY HAS, HE SAID, 22 PILOTS 11 FLIGHT ENGINEERS AND 7 NAVIGATORS. HIRING IS CONTINUING.

3. WILL FORWARD ADDITIONAL DETAILS AND EMBASSY COMMENTS FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS WITH LOMBARD.
HURD

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